

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 0245

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, LI
SUBJECT: LAW OF THE SEA: LIBERIAN PREPARATIONS FOR PENDING
MEETINGS

REF: 77 STATE 294137

1. ROLAND BARNES, CHIEF GOL DELEGATE TO THE LAST LAW OF THE
SEA CONFERENCE, TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR JANUARY 11 THAT
TO HIW KNOWLEDGE THE GOL HAD MADE NO PREPARATIONS YET FOR
EITHER A FEBRUARY INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OR THE MARCH
REGULAR LOS SESSION IN GENEVA. AS FAR AS HE KNOWS, NO
DECISION HAS BEEN MADE WHETHER HE WILL CONTINUE TO REPRESENT
THE GOL AT LOS MEETINGS OR, IN VIEW OF HIS RECENT APPOINT-
MENT AS AN ASSOCIATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, BE REPLACED.
(COMMENT: REPLACEMENT OF BARNES WILL BE DIFFICULT AND HE
MIGHT BE CONTINUED AS CHIEF GOL DELEGATE DESPITE THE
PRESSURE OF THE SUPREME COURT CALENDAR. WINSTON TUBMAN,
BARNES GIFTED AND INTERNATIONALLY-KNOWN PREDECESSOR IN LOS
MATTER, IS ONE POSSIBILITY BUT IS PRESENTLY DEEPLY INVOLVED
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IN A CRUCIAL STAGE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERIA'S FIRST
SUGAR CANE AND SUGAR REFINING COMPLEX, OF WHICH HE IS
THE MANAGER.)

2. BARNES PREDICTED THAT GOL POLICY ON LOS MATTERS
WOULD SEE LITTLE CHANGE IN 1978 SESSIONS. HE NOTED THAT
THE GOL--THOUGH PULLED TO A DEGREE BY THIRD WORLD PRESSURES

IN LOS AFFAIRS--STILL IS CONVINCED THAT NO AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED ON THE DEEP-SEA BED MINING REGIME WITHOUT ADEQUATE RECOGNITION BY THE GROUP OF 77 OF THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THOSE WHOSE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND CAPITAL ARE BASIC TO EXPLOITATION. HE FEELS THAT TO ACHIEVE A CODIFIED LAW OF THE SEA FOR DEEP-SEA BED AND CONTINENTAL SHELF EXPLOITATION AND RELATED NAVIGATION AND ACCESS MATTERS WOULD BE A SUPERB ACHIEVEMENT FOR MANKIND, AND HE REGRETS THE "BLINDNESS" OF THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH ARE DEMANDING MORE FROM THE MINING COUNTRIES THAN SHOULD BE REASONABLY EXPECTED.

3. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR URGED BARNES TO DO WHAT HE CAN TO MOVE THE GOL TO MORE TIMELY CONSIDERATION OF ITS POSITION AT COMING LOS SESSIONS, ASSURING HIM THAT THOSE NOW DRAFTING U.S. POSITION PAPERS WOULD APPRECIATE THOUGHTS FROM THE GOL ON MEANS BEST SUITED TO BREAK OUT OF THE PRESENT SEEMING IMPASSE ON BASIC MATTERS. BARNES SAID HE WOULD APPROACH THE FOREIGN MINISTER JANUARY 12 ON LOS MATTERS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: THE EMBASSY URGES THAT EITHER THE SECRETARY OR AMBASSADOR ELLIOT RICHARDSON SEND A PERSONAL APPEAL TO GOL FOREIGN MINISTER C. CECIL DENNIS NOT RPT NOT FOR SUPPORT FOR U.S. POSITIONS BUT FOR GOL IDEAS ON HOW BEST TO APPROACH CERTAIN SPECIFIC LOS ISSUES. TO ASK FOR A CONFIDENTIAL OPINION ON POSSIBLE
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ADTERNATE WORDING OF PARTS OF TEXTS WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF U.S. INITIATIVE THIS EMBASSY ENCOURAGES. TOO OFTEN WE HAVE OUR HAND OUT ASKING THE GOL TO VOTE OUR WAY, AND ALMOST NEVER DO WE GIVZ IT THE SATISFACTION OF BEING ASKED BEFOREHAND HOW IT THINKS A MATTER MIGHT BE HANDLED. THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOL WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IF WE CANNOT GO ALONG WITH ONE OF ITS IDEAS IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE COMPARED WITH THE FEELING COMMUNICATED THAT THE U.S. TAKES THE TROUBLE TO ASK A SMALL FRIEND FOR HIS OPINION. A PRACTICAL PAY-OFF COULD WELL BE A HEIGHTENED WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE GOL TO SPEAK OUT IN THIRD WORLD FORA ON BEHALF OF MODERATION ON ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE U.S.
CARTER

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